

# Skin Cancer Screening Prevalence Inching Higher

BY BRUCE JANCIN

SAN FRANCISCO — The prevalence of skin cancer screening among U.S. adults inched higher during the first half of this decade, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In 2000, one in seven adults said they had ever undergone a head-to-toe skin exam by a dermatologist or other physician. By 2005, this figure rose to one in six, Naheed A. Lakhani reported at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology.

Skin cancer screening appropriately was more common among groups at greater risk, including whites, individuals over age 50 years, and those with a personal or family history of skin cancer, noted Ms. Lakhani of the Coordinating Office for Global Health at the CDC.

She presented an analysis of data from the National Health Interview Survey conducted in 2000 and 2005.

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Each survey embraced a nationally representative sample composed of roughly 30,000 civilian noninstitutionalized adults.

In 2000, 15% of U.S. adults reported ever having had a total body skin screening exam given by a physician. By 2005, this figure had reached 17%. The prevalence of skin cancer screening was 16% among men and significantly higher at 18% in women, who in general are believed to be at higher risk because of their greater use of tanning beds.

Skin cancer screening prevalence was highest, at 69%, among individuals with a personal history of any form of skin cancer. People with a family history of melanoma were more than 2.4-fold more

likely to have ever had a physician-administered total body skin exam, compared with individuals without such a history.

Those with a family history of non-melanoma skin cancer were 1.76-fold more likely to have undergone a screening exam.

Nearly one in five white adults reported ever having been screened for skin cancer. That's a significantly higher

rate than for other racial and ethnic groups. Screening prevalence rose with adults' education level, physical activity, number of sunburns in the past year, sun sensitivity, and frequency of using sunscreen and/or sun-protective clothing, she continued.

One in five Americans will develop skin cancer during their lifetime. Since 1985, the American Academy of Dermatology has offered skin screening ex-

ams conducted by academy members through the AAD Melanoma/Skin Cancer Screening Program. The American Cancer Society also recommends total body skin exams.

However, earlier this year, in a move criticized by many dermatologists, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force concluded that insufficient evidence exists to recommend for or against routine skin cancer screening. ■

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